Medical Leave of Absence Policy

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to provide graduate and undergraduate students with a structured process to request a **Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA)** when a physical or mental health condition significantly interferes with their ability to participate in academic activities. This policy ensures equitable treatment of on-ground and online students and applies to both traditional semester-based and accelerated course formats.

Scope
This policy applies to all graduate and undergraduate students, including:

- full-time and part-time students
- on-ground, hybrid, and fully online students
- students enrolled in:
    - standard academic semesters
    - accelerated formats (ie., 7-week sessions)
    - licensure/credential programs

This policy does not replace or supersede:

- institutional withdrawal policies;
- disability accommodation policies; or
- federal or state laws (e.g., ADA, Section 504, Title IX)

Duration of Leave
The standard duration of a MLOA for undergraduate students is up to one academic year (two consecutive semesters) and up to 12 consecutive months for graduate students. Extensions may be granted with updated medical documentation, subject to program and accreditation limits.

Relationship to Accessibility Services and Accommodations
Students who can continue academically with reasonable accommodations should pursue support through the Office of Accessibility Services & Accommodations rather than MLOA. MLOA is not a substitute for accommodations.

Confidentiality
All medical information will be maintained in compliance with:

- FERPA;
- HIPAA (as applicable); and
- institutional privacy policies

Request Process
To begin the leave of absence for medical reasons process students must make their requests in writing (via email or secure message through the Medicat portal) to the Medical Leave Coordinator (Kennedy Scott @ kscott@sbu.edu) at or prior to the time they are requesting to take the leave. Leaves will not be granted retroactively. Medical leaves of absence will not be entertained after the official last date to withdraw from classes, as established by the University's academic calendar, with the exception of extreme emergency cases.

A leave of absence for medical reasons must be issued by the Vice President for Student Affairs, upon recommendation of the Medical Leave Coordinator (Kennedy Scott @ kscott@sbu.edu) in collaboration with the University medical provider and/or Counseling Center staff or other appropriate professionals. Medical leave is typically granted when a student's condition makes it necessary for the student to leave campus for an extended period of treatment. A medical leave serves a student in the following ways:

1. A student is withdrawn from classes, receives a "W" on the student transcript for those courses, and while the student does not receive academic credit for the courses, the student is not penalized for the withdrawal.
2. A student living in a University residential facility at the time a leave of absence is approved will be granted a residential living space for the following semester upon readmission, provided that on-campus living is not a recommended restriction.
3. A student living in a University residential facility at the time a leave of absence is granted must remove all personal possessions and return their room key to the Director of Campus Living within 48 hours of the leave being issued. Any additional time must be approved by the Director of Campus Living. Students will incur room and applicable board charges until their residential space is vacated.
4. Financial payments to the University are reimbursed on a prorated basis. To understand the financial implications of a leave of absence students are encouraged to discuss their particular situation with the Student Records and Financial Services Office at https://www.sbu.edu/affordability/student-financial-services or 716.375.2020.
5. Students should verify continued eligibility for purchased third party student health plans.
6. International students should consult the International Student Services Office regarding visa implications.

Academic Status During Leave
A student on a medical leave of absence may not return to classes, reside on campus, participate in student social life or other campus activities, or use St. Bonaventure University facilities, until the Vice President of Student Affairs has approved their return. While on approved MLOA:

- student is considered **not enrolled**
- no academic work may be submitted
- access to learning platforms may be limited
- student does not earn credit
- time on leave does **not count toward time-to-degree**

An approved MLOA:

- does **not** count as academic probation or dismissal
- does not negatively affect GPA
- pauses academic progress requirements

Students must still meet program time limits upon return.

Return from Medical Leave
Students leaving the University for medical reasons will be eligible to participate in the re-enrollment process only after they have received necessary treatment, and upon recommendation of the Medical Leave Coordinator (Kennedy Scott @ kscott@sbu.edu), in consultation with the University medical provider and/or Counseling Center personnel, and upon final approval of the Vice President for Student Affairs. The student may be recommended for readmission only after the University receives a completed Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA) return form from a qualified health care professional(s) specific and relevant to initial reason for the approved leave, and the student participates in a meeting with the relevant University professionals.

Relevant University professionals may include the Medical Leave Coordinator (Kennedy Scott @ kscott@sbu.edu), the Director of Campus Living, the Director of Accessibility Services & Accommodations, and/or the student's faculty advisor and/or Program Director. The University reserves the right to request consultations between the student and relevant professionals of the University's choice.

After the completed Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA) return form and required student meeting is completed and assessed by the Medical Leave Coordinator (Kennedy Scott @ kscott@sbu.edu), a recommendation will be made to the Vice President for Student Affairs who will make a decision regarding the student's eligibility to seek readmission. Stipulations for returning to the University will be outlined at the time a request for leave is granted. Students who have withdrawn from St. Bonaventure University with good standing may be re-enrolled when formal application for re-enrollment is approved by the Records Office. Re-enrollment is subject to:

- program capacity;
- course availability; and
- any conditions set at time of leave

Additional graduate student re-enrollment requirements may apply for, including but not limited to:

- licensure
- clinical placement
- program specific requirements

Before a student is re-enrolled, the student must furnish an updated medical history record. Any undergraduate student who leaves St. Bonaventure University for medical reasons must complete the re-enrollment process by July 15 for the fall semester and by December 1 for the spring semester. Graduate student re-enrollment dates are established by each Program to ensure the student can resume course of study appropriately. The re-enrollment process requires that a student complete the following steps:

1. complete and submit a Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA) return form through the Medical Leave Coordinator (Kennedy Scott at kscott@sbu.edu);
2. provide documentation as required by the Medical Leave Coordinator (Kennedy Scott @ kscott@sbu.edu) /Vice President for Student Affairs;
3. discuss with the appropriate University representative(s) the request for re-enrollment. For graduate students, discussion may include additional considerations for licensure, clinical placements, course context changes, etc. to ensure the course of study is resumed appropriately.

If readmission is approved by the Vice President for Student Affairs, on-campus housing, when appropriate, will be assigned by the Office of Residence Life.